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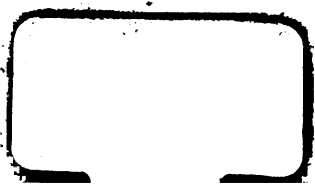
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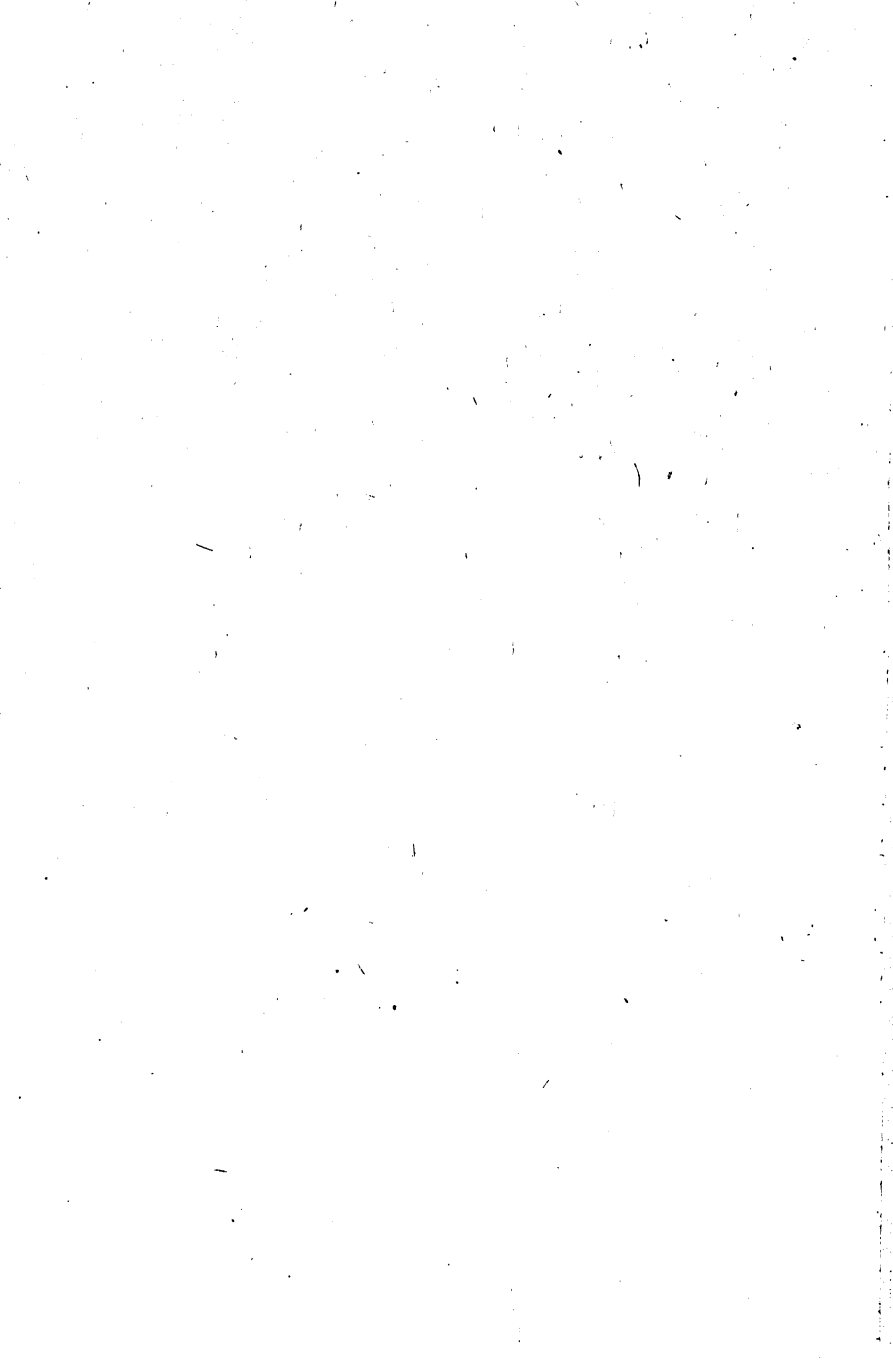
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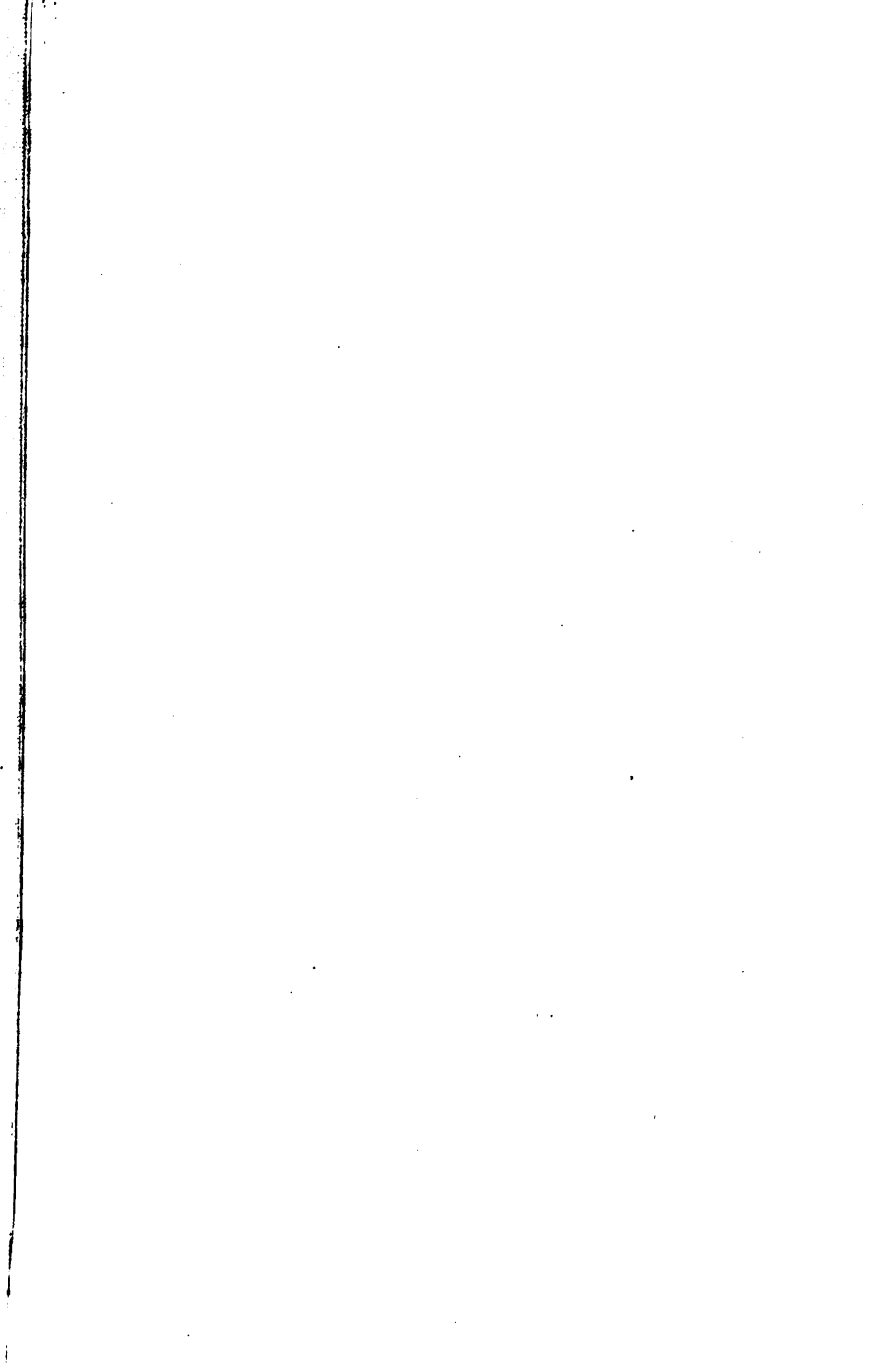
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J.J.

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Timothy C. Weston Esq<sup>r</sup>  
for his library,  
J.F.P.

March 15, 1894.  
Leicester, Mass.

A BOOK OF GOLD, ETC.

Printed  
N.P.





# A BOOK OF GOLD,

AND OTHER SONNETS.

BY

JOHN JAMES PIATT,

AUTHOR OF 'IDYLLS AND LYRICS OF THE OHIO VALLEY,' ETC.

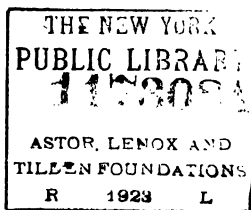
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## CONTENTS.

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- I. A BOOK OF GOLD.
- II. THE FLOWER OF A DREAM.
- III. NIGHT-THOUGHTS.
- IV. IF YOU SHOULD VANISH.
- V. FOR AN ANNIVERSARY.
- VI. A SABBATH WALK.
- VII. TO A POET : ON HIS MARRIAGE.—I.
- VIII. TO A POET : ON HIS MARRIAGE.—II.
- IX. AWAKE IN DARKNESS.
- X. THE CHILD IN THE STREET.
- XI. A STAR'S PRESENCE.
- XII. A SCATTERED FAMILY.
- XIII. THE HOUSE'S DARLING.
- XIV. MIRAGE.
- XV. THE TRUNDLE-BED.
- XVI. A MORNING IN SEPTEMBER.
- XVII. NOONING AT THE HALF-WAY HOUSE.

*Smith. 3 Dec. 1923*



## *CONTENTS.*

XVIII. TRAVELLERS.

XIX. THE BRONZE STATUE OF WASHINGTON.

XX. TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

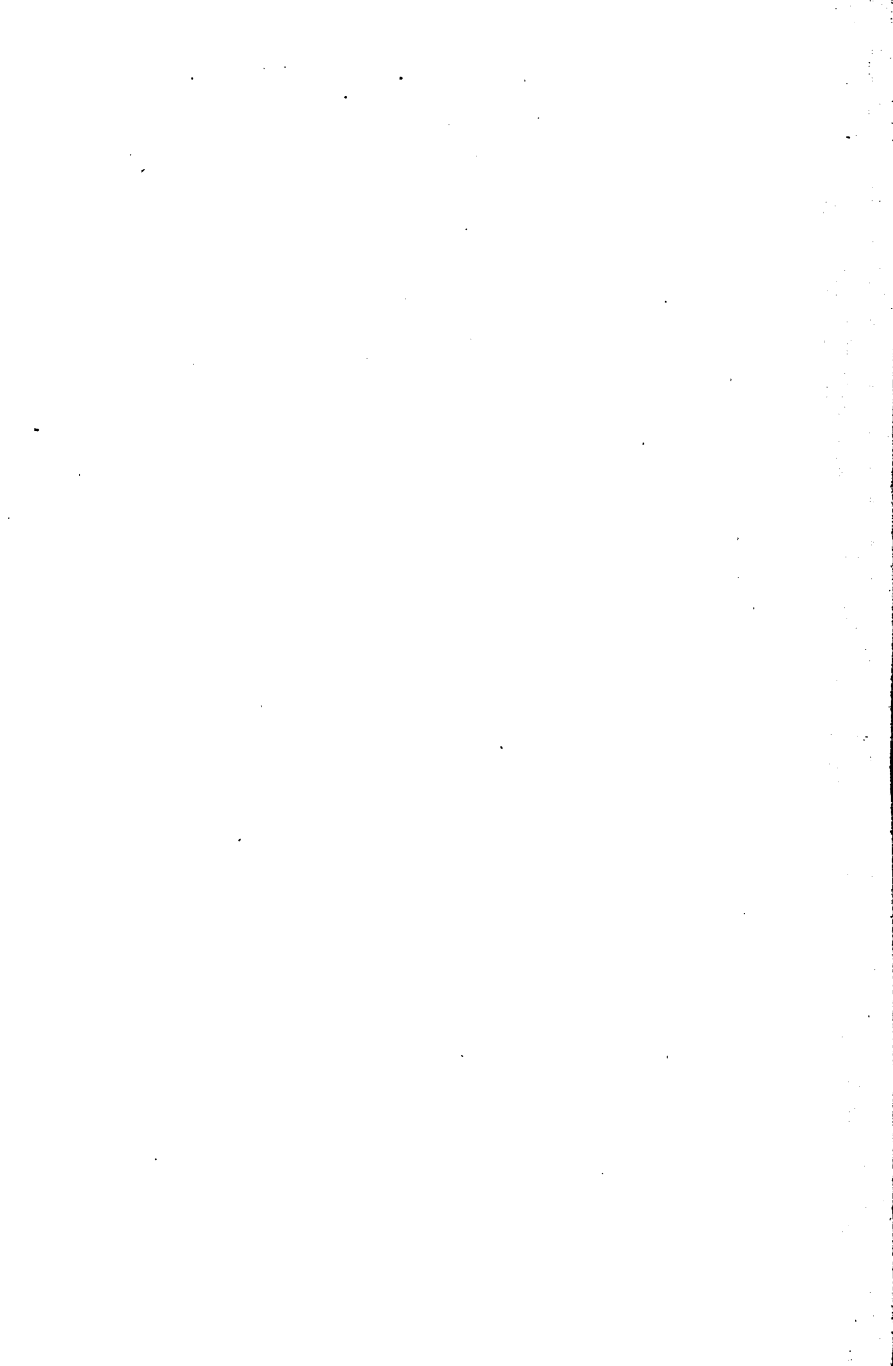
XXI. MY SHADOW'S STATURE.

XXII. MY NIGHTMARE.

XXIII. GLOW-WORM AND STAR.

XXIV. TO A WOODLAND CATHEDRAL.

XXV. FARTHER.

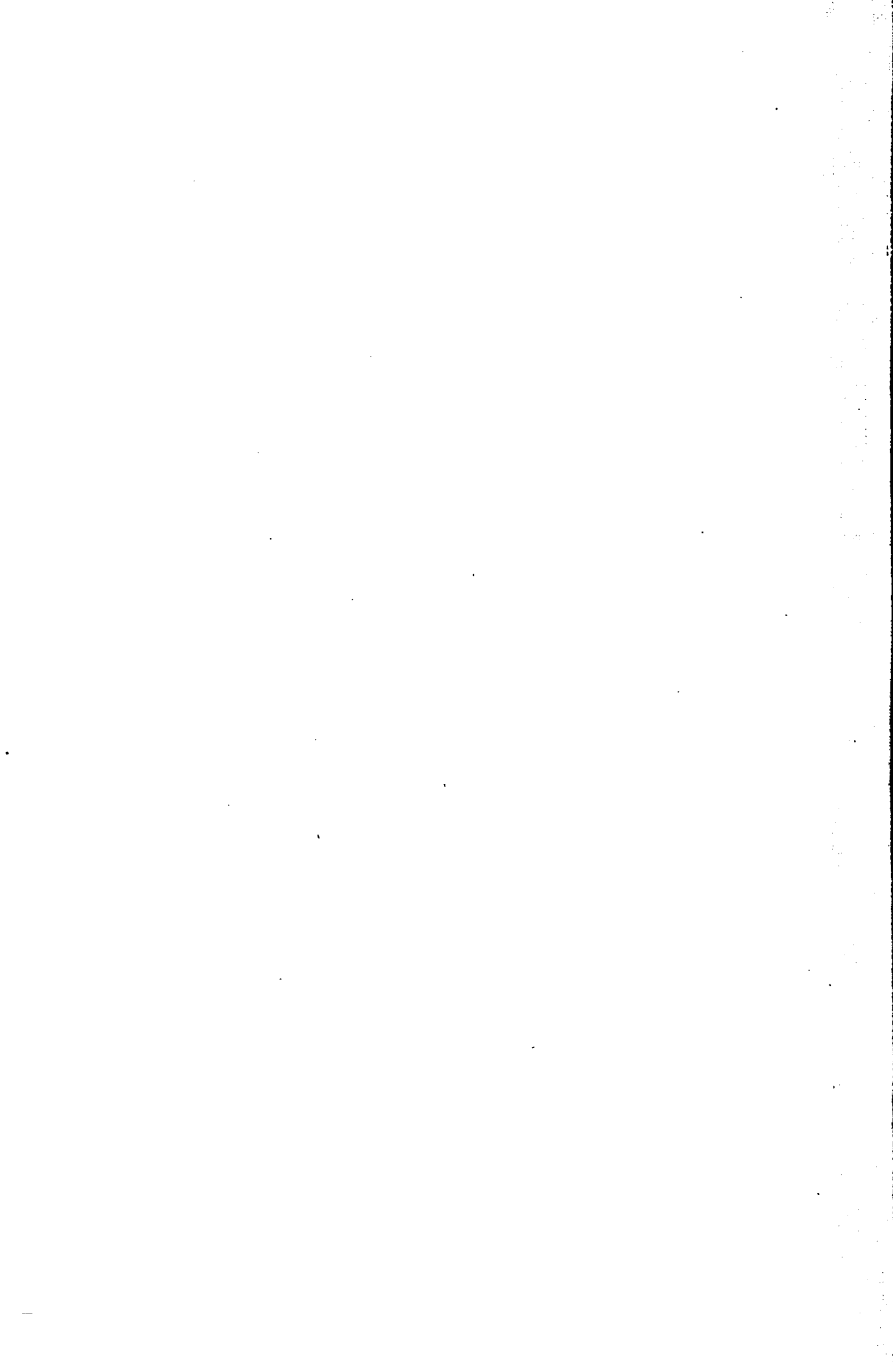


I.

A BOOK OF GOLD.

**I**F I could write a Book made sweet with thee  
(Oh, therefore sweet with all that may be  
sweet!),

With lingering music, nevermore complete,  
Should turn its golden pages: each should be  
Like whispering voice, or beckoning hand, and he  
Who read should follow, while his heart would beat  
For some new miracle, with most eager feet  
Through sacred labyrinths of mystery.  
Temple and lighted home of Love should seem  
The Book wherein my love remember'd thine:  
There holiest visions evermore should gleam,  
Vanishing wings, with wandering souls of sound  
And breaths of incense from an inmost shrine,  
Sought nearer evermore and never found.

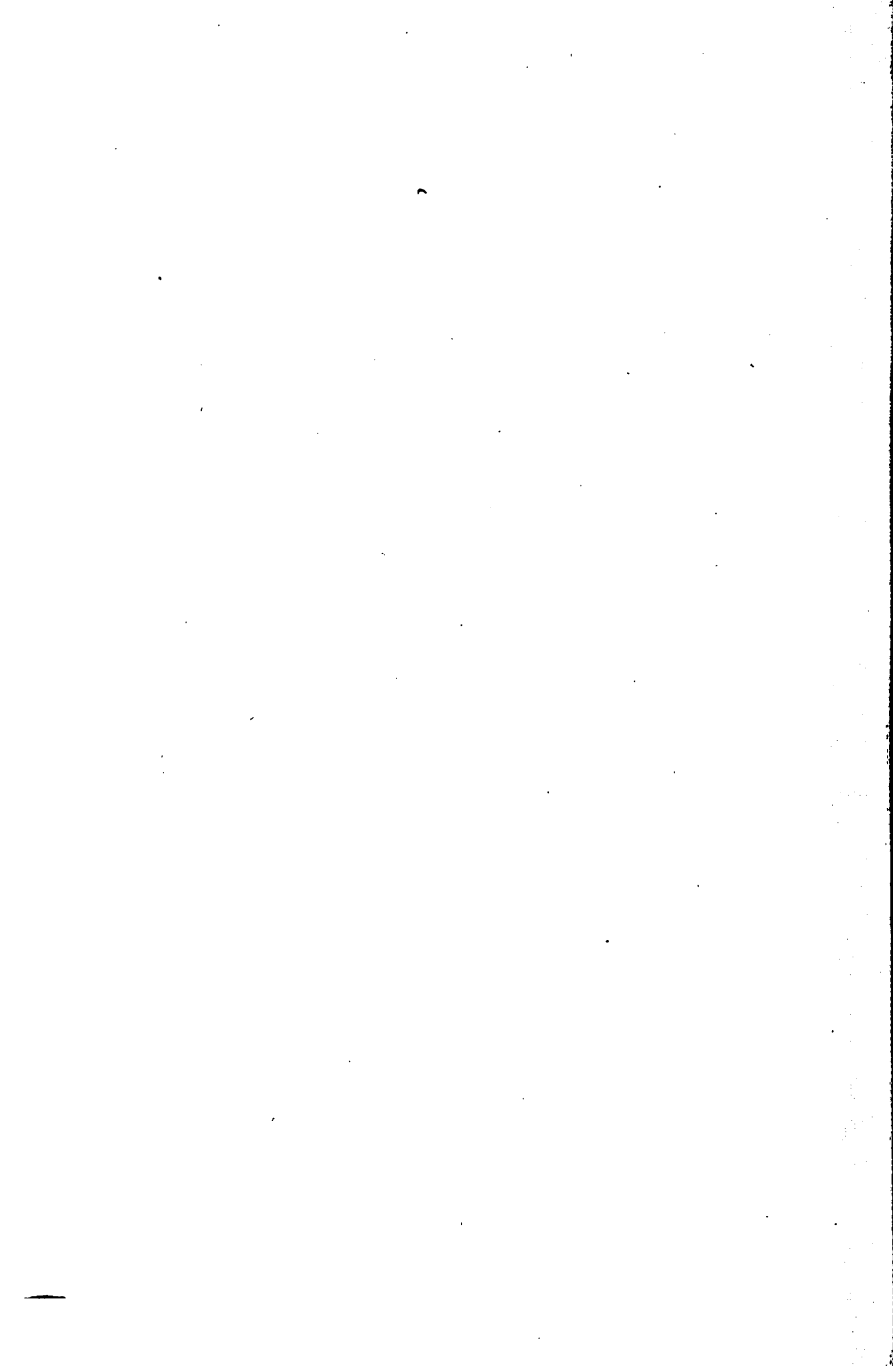




## II.

### THE FLOWER OF A DREAM.

I DREAM'D ; I saw a lily in my dream  
Of feverish wakefulness at twilight hour :  
Issuing from moonlight grew that sainted flower  
Above my pillow ; and, the tender gleam  
Of its white radiance, like a fragrant stream,  
Alighting on me, marvell'd I : ' What dower  
Of purity is thine, which 'gainst the power  
Of aught impure a steadfast charm doth seem ?'  
. . . Transfigured dreadlessly, the lily grew  
An angel's stature, passing so away.  
Then I awoke from fever which had been,  
But in that dewy presence could not stay,  
And over me you leant with holier dew :  
Out of your heart had grown the flower within.

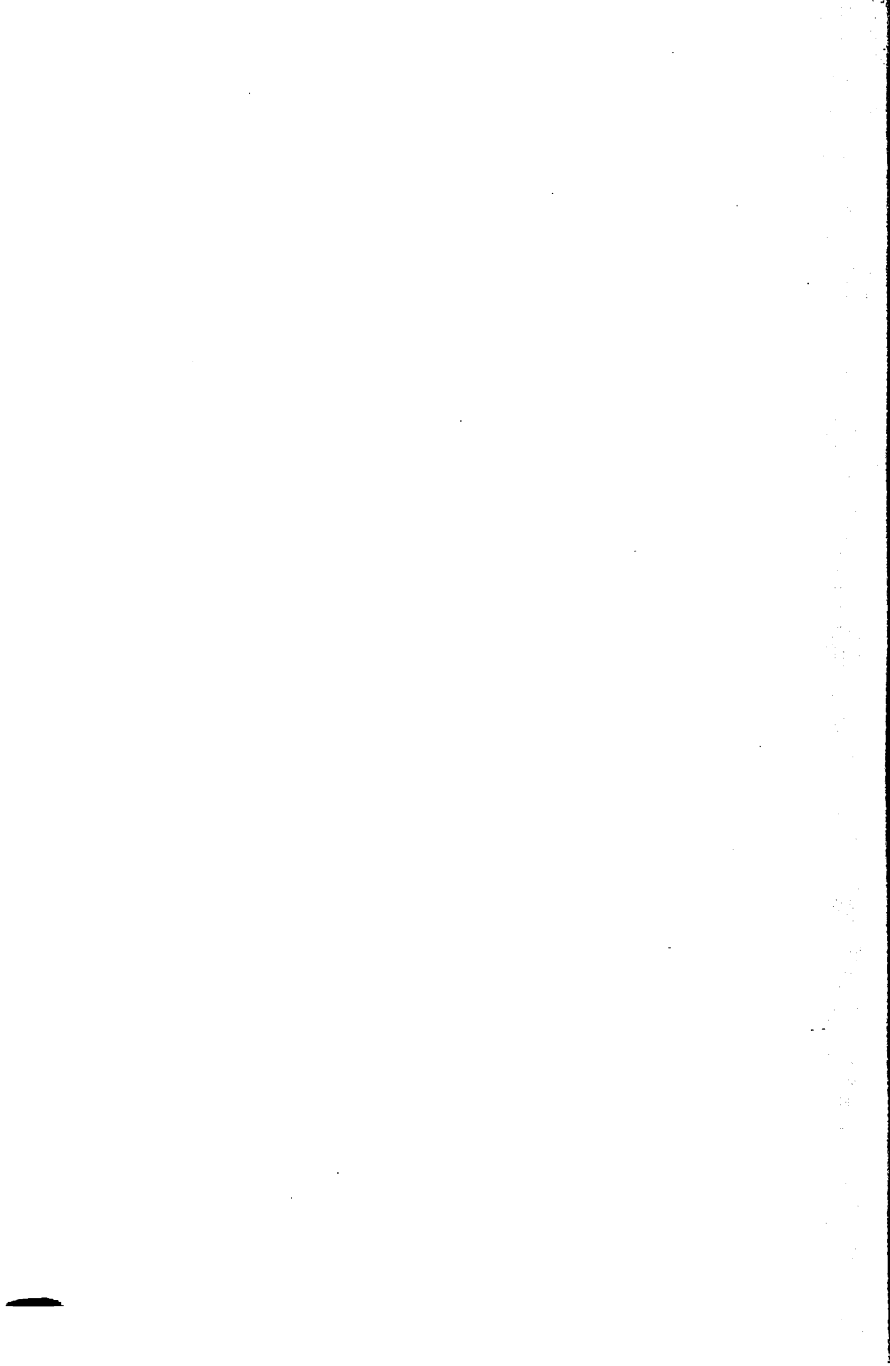


### III.

#### NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

THEY come, in long procession rise before  
My wakeful sight, sweet thoughts, Belovèd,  
of thee

And of thy love, the dearest dream to me  
That ever grew dear truth for evermore ;  
For, as to a child, in his hush'd bed—the door  
Half-open where his mother's light may be  
A comfort to his lonely sense when he,  
Though waking, feels warm slumber reach the core  
Of his fresh spirit—who drops his lids at last,  
Visiting Fairyland, while numberless  
Lithe shadows pass and shapes created fast,  
Charming him till he sleeps, and are his dream :  
So, while I breathe in tender wakefulness,  
Sleep-bordering thoughts with blissful visions teem.



IV.

IF YOU SHOULD VANISH.

**I**F you should vanish in some lonely place,  
And never any more appear again  
(Though your lost face should float about my brain  
The elusive phantom of a lost embrace,  
Out of the mystery of a starless space),  
And I should strive, with long conceptive pain,  
Your form so dear from marble to regain,  
Or paint the flying memory of your face :  
I have not seen you, Dear, as others deem—  
Though stone or colour might their semblance give,  
I'd watch a child steal shyly from your heart,  
To comfort little birds that orphans seem,  
Or flowers that need a drop of dew to live ;  
And this, I think, would baffle subtlest art.

4

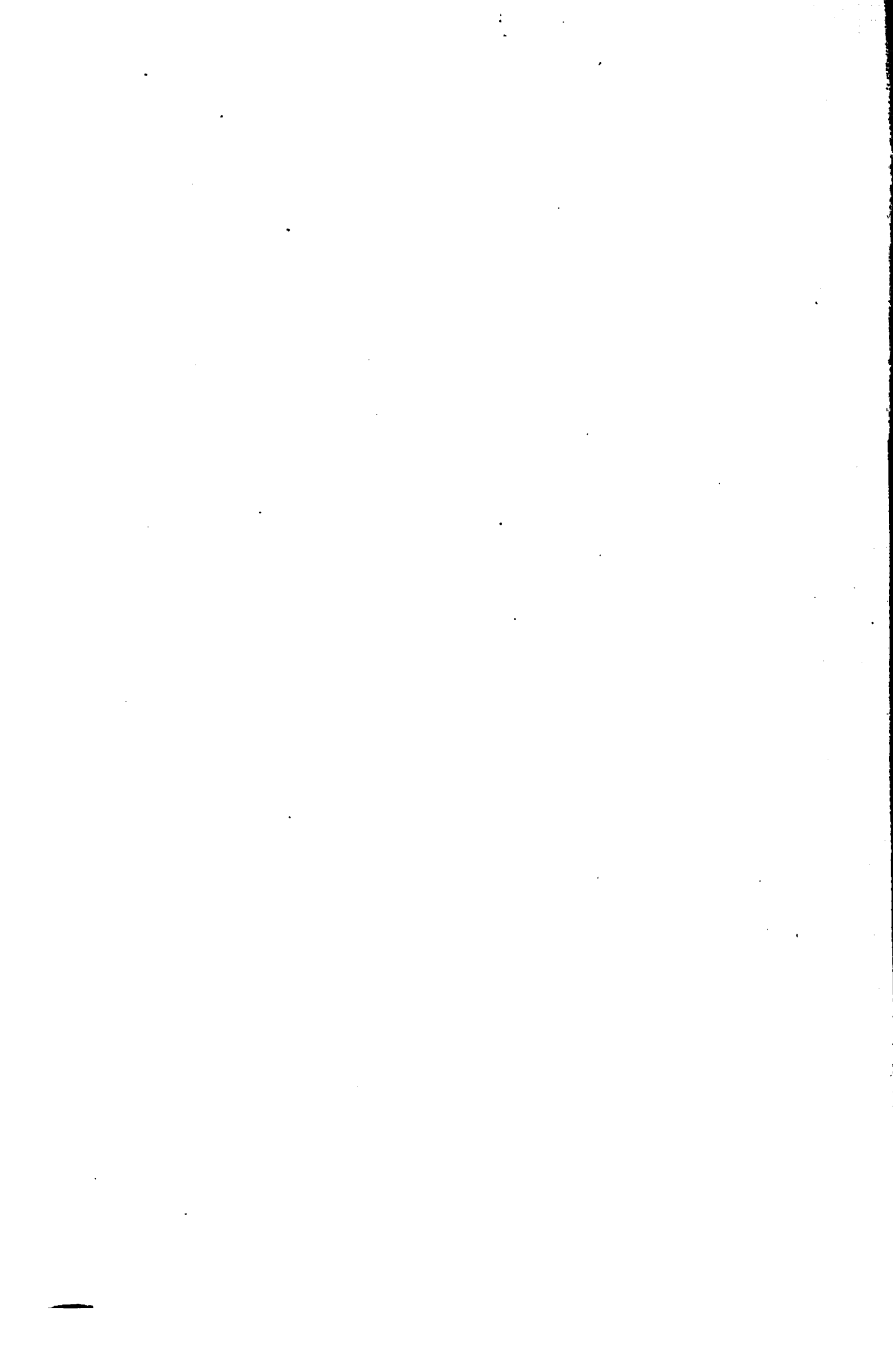


V.

FOR AN ANNIVERSARY.

[AUGUST 11, 18—.]

A MOTHER and a Child, most blessed sight,  
My spirit saw—a pure and holy pair :  
The infant open-eyed to morning air  
Of its new world, baptized in earthly light ;  
The Mother with the ecstatic knowledge bright  
Of her first motherhood, how gently fair !  
Breathing her blissful breath to heaven in prayer,  
Keeping her heart so near her new delight !  
Who are you, gentle visions ?' then I said . . .  
But these were gone. An Angel came and spoke :  
' I am that mother ; see, my darling's head  
I lay upon your bosom.' I awoke,  
Warm with great tender gratitude, and wept—  
Your head was on my bosom while I slept.





VI.

A SABBATH WALK.

[JULY 21, 1862.]

A YEAR ago to-day, the Sabbath hours  
Were sweet to us, wandering together, here  
In these green woods. The skies were soft and  
clear,  
And the sun wrought his miracles in flowers.  
Sweet was the leafy stillness of these bowers ;  
The birds sang in the tender atmosphere,  
And God's own voice seem'd whispering, low and  
near,  
To His hush'd children in those hearts of ours.  
Lo ! scarcely mingling with the real day,  
Far thunders beat in the heart of solitude,  
Echoes of Hell to Heaven's divine repose ;  
For, while we breathed the breathless Sabbath wood,  
The cannon's awful monotone arose  
Where the dread Sabbath-breaking Preacher stood !

GEORGETOWN HEIGHTS, D.C.



## VII.

### TO A POET : ON HIS MARRIAGE.

#### I.

‘THE Artist with his Art alone should wed,’  
They say, the worldly-wise,—‘who runs  
may read ;’

And I would grant it holy truth indeed,  
Did Art want men in whom the man was dead—  
Pale priesthood. But with fullest life instead,  
She ordains her truer worshippers : her need  
Is men who live as well as dream their deed ;  
She loves to see her lovers sweat for bread.  
O friend, I know you not as one who bear,  
Dream-like, upon your brow the ideal sphere,  
And kick the real world beneath your feet ;  
I see you, brave young Atlas, lift in air  
The loving load of manhood, without fear.  
Both worlds be one to you, a world complete !

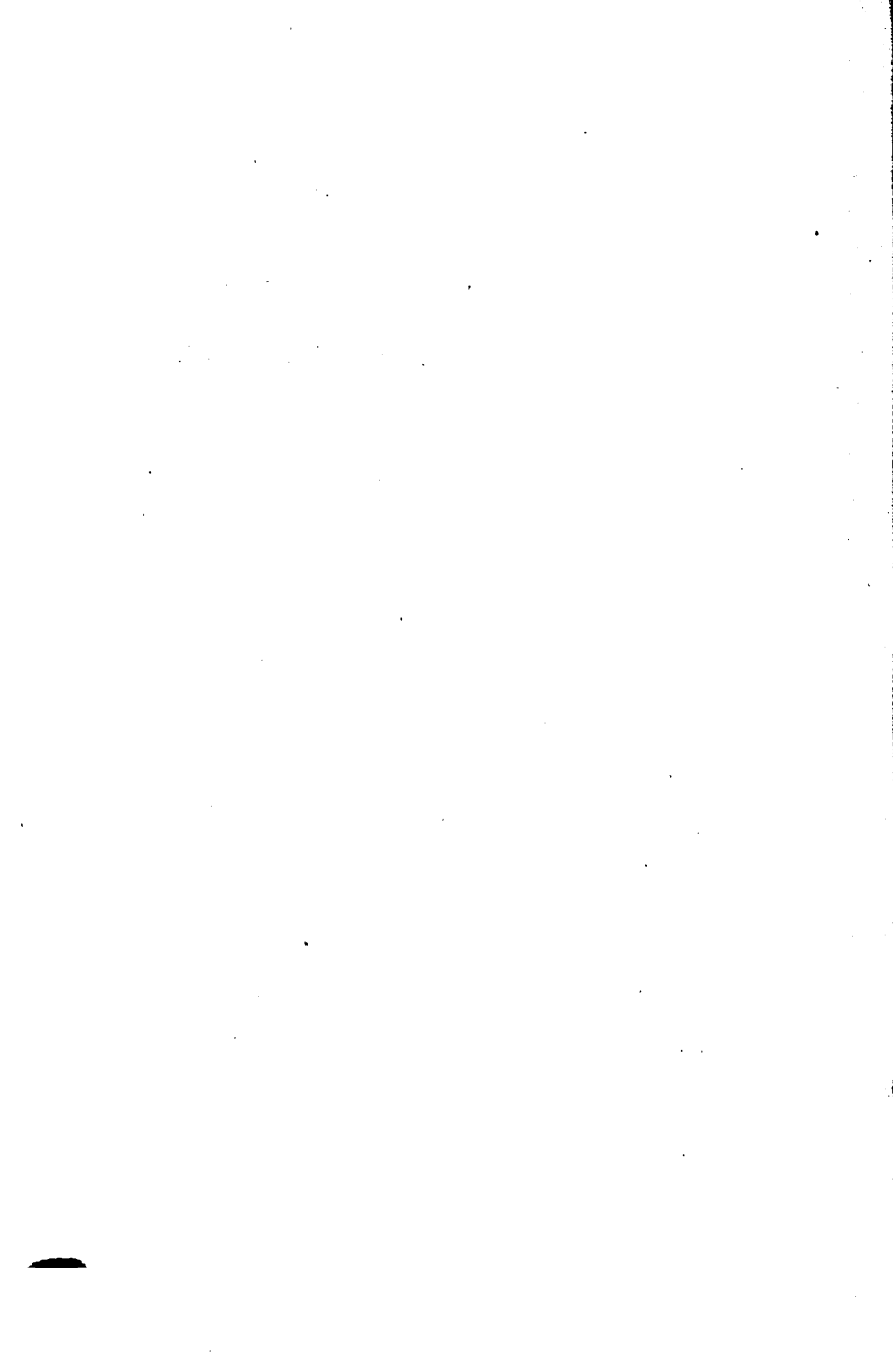


## VIII.

### TO A POET: ON HIS MARRIAGE.

#### II.

**I**F one should ask me what your life should seem,  
Built by the great, slow mason, Time, for you  
(My wishes being master-builders, too),  
I'd say a high cathedral, with the stream  
Of wondrous light through windows all a-gleam  
With heavenliest shapes and sacred histories true  
Of truest lives that ever immortal grew  
From low mortality's divinest dream.  
Above, uplifted on some chaunt divine,  
An angel choir should cluster, dumb in stone ;  
Below, and wrapt in the religious air,  
Most saintly brows should with a halo shine ;  
And, amid marble multitudes alone,  
Lo ! one sweet woman's face the holiest there !



## IX.

### AWAKE IN DARKNESS.

[AFTER HEARING OF MY MOTHER'S DEATH.]

MOTHER, if I could cry from out the night  
And you could come (oh, tearful memory!),  
How softly close ! to soothe and comfort me,  
As when a child awaken'd with affright,  
My lips again, as weak and helpless quite,  
Would call you, call you, sharp and plaintively—  
Ah me ! in vain ! your face I should not see ;  
Your voice no more would bring my darkness light.  
To this shut room, though I should wail and weep,  
You would not come to speak one brooding word  
And let its comfort warm me into sleep  
And leave me dreaming of its comfort heard :  
Though all the night to morn at last should creep,  
My cry would fail, your answer be deferr'd.

NOVEMBER, 1865.



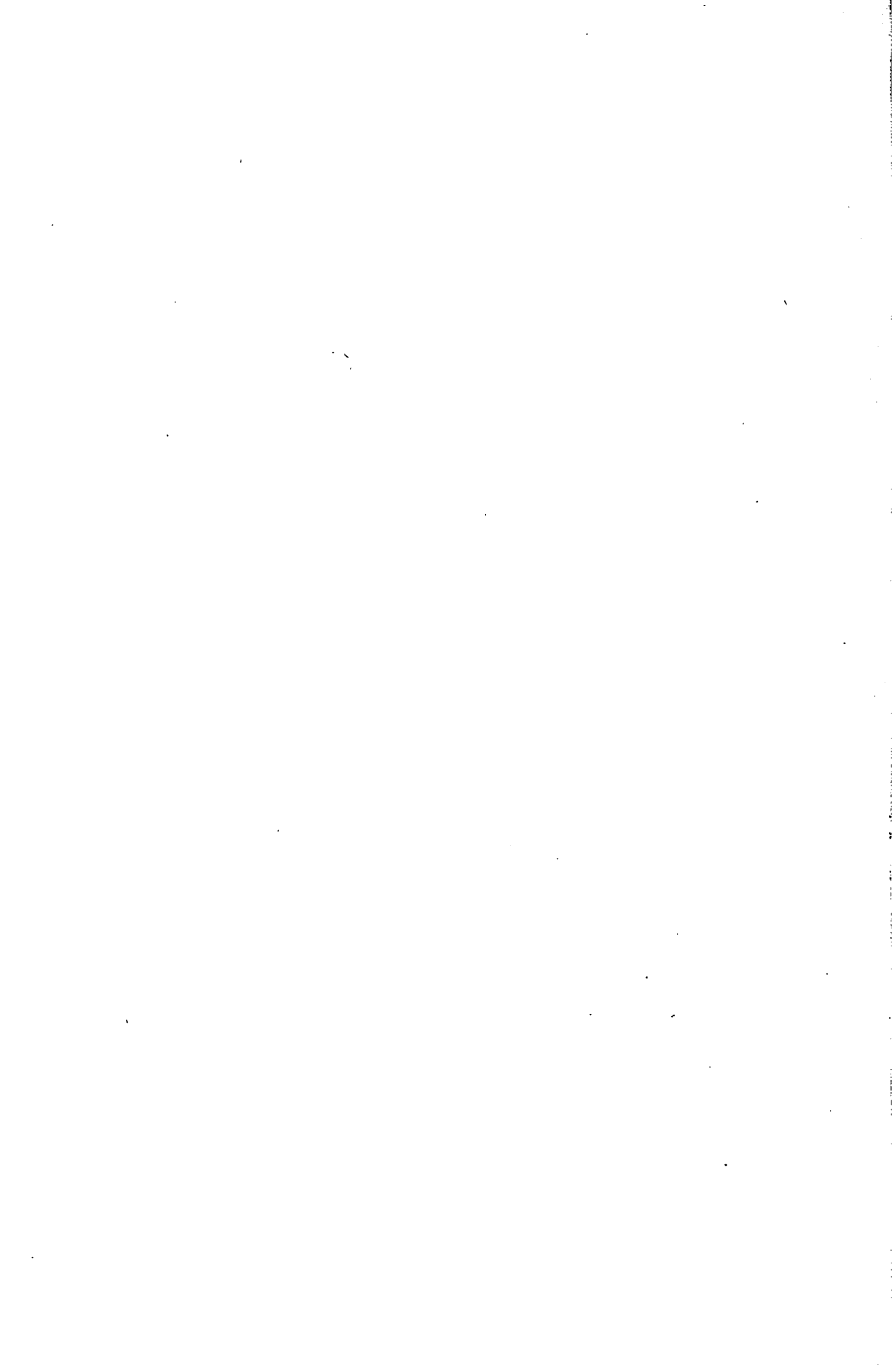


X.

THE CHILD IN THE STREET.

[L'ENVOI FOR A VOLUME OF DOUBLE AUTHORSHIP.]

**E**VEN as tender parents lovingly  
Send a dear child in some true servant's care  
Forth in the street, for larger light and air,  
Feeling the sun her guardian will be,  
And dreaming with a blushful pride that she  
Will earn sweet smiles and glances everywhere,  
From loving faces, and that passers fair  
Will bend and bless and kiss her, when they see  
And ask her name, and if her home is near,  
And think, 'O gentle child, how blest are they  
Whose twofold love bears up a single flower !'  
And so with softer musing move away :  
We send thee forth, O Book, thy little hour—  
The world may pardon us to hold thee dear.



## XI.

### A STAR'S PRESENCE.

WHILE the earth sinks into her dewy dream,  
A star is shining over me to-night,

A tremulous star, an atom of quick light,  
Through ashen clouds that lose their twilight gleam.

'Perchance,' in self-commune I muse, 'some one

Far hour shall draw my spirit in silence here

To stoop a shaken head through many a year

Against yon cloudy memory of the sun ;

Then from this cliff mine eyes shall gaze around :

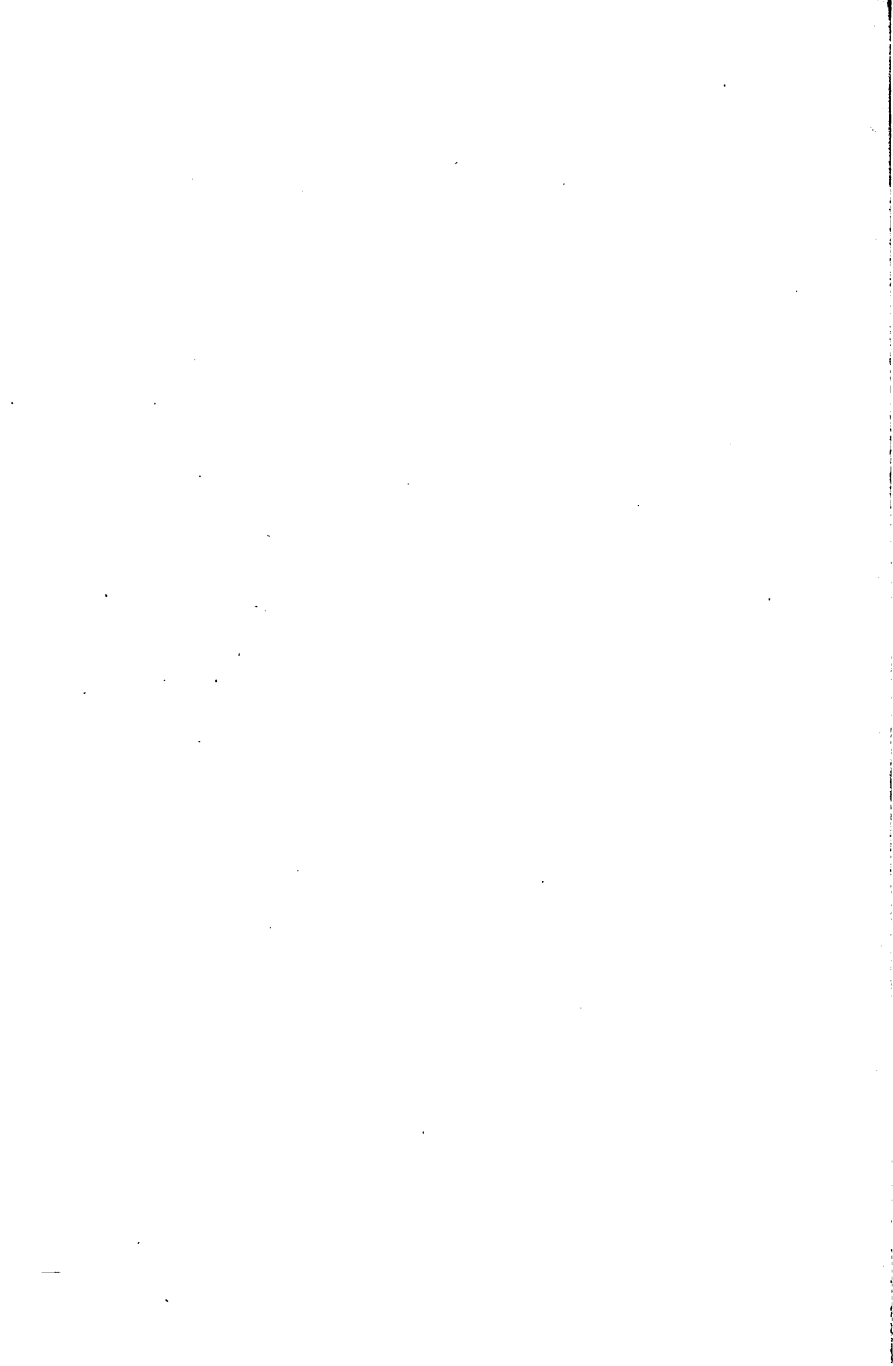
The wood no more may screen yon shimmering  
river ;

The mill no more, in its still mirror cast,

O'er the dusk waters echo its dull sound ;

Yet yonder star will move not to the Past,

But throb into my soul the same for ever.'

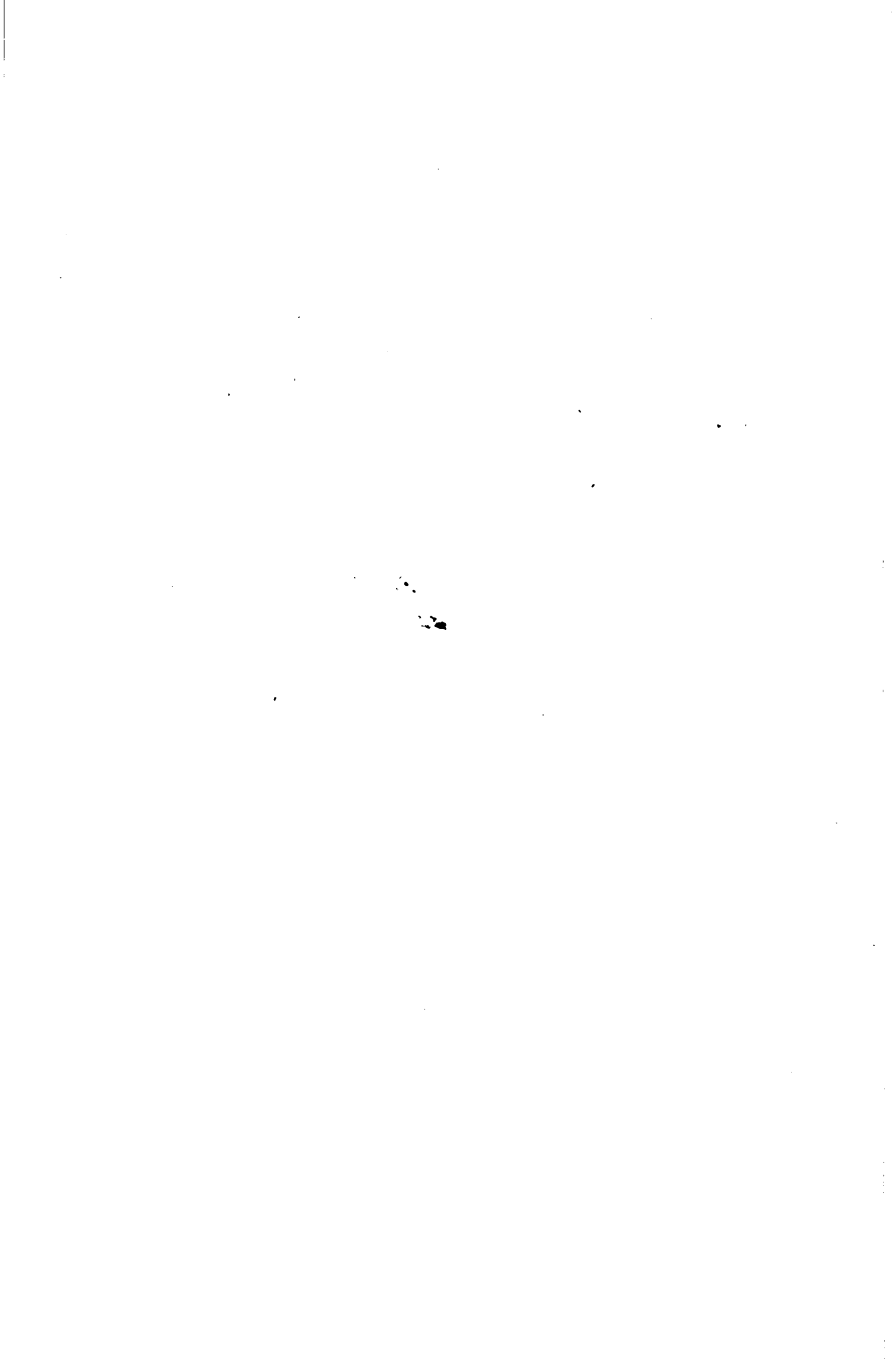


## XII.

### A SCATTERED FAMILY.

**W**E have been all together on the earth ;  
But now the band that bound our gentle  
sheaf

Is loosed—the powerful magic bond of birth ;  
Our hearts no longer turn one golden leaf  
Each day ; no more, through every winter night,  
Brightening within though skies without may frown,  
We all are gathered close about one light,  
With loving wreaths the warm quick hours to crown,  
For the one word of ‘ Home,’ which we had worn,  
From the soul’s lips, to worldly language clear,  
Returns an alien answer to its sound,  
From other firesides, winter-lighted, borne . . .  
‘ Home !’—’twas a word of Heaven homeless here,  
Whose wandering echo in our hearts we found !



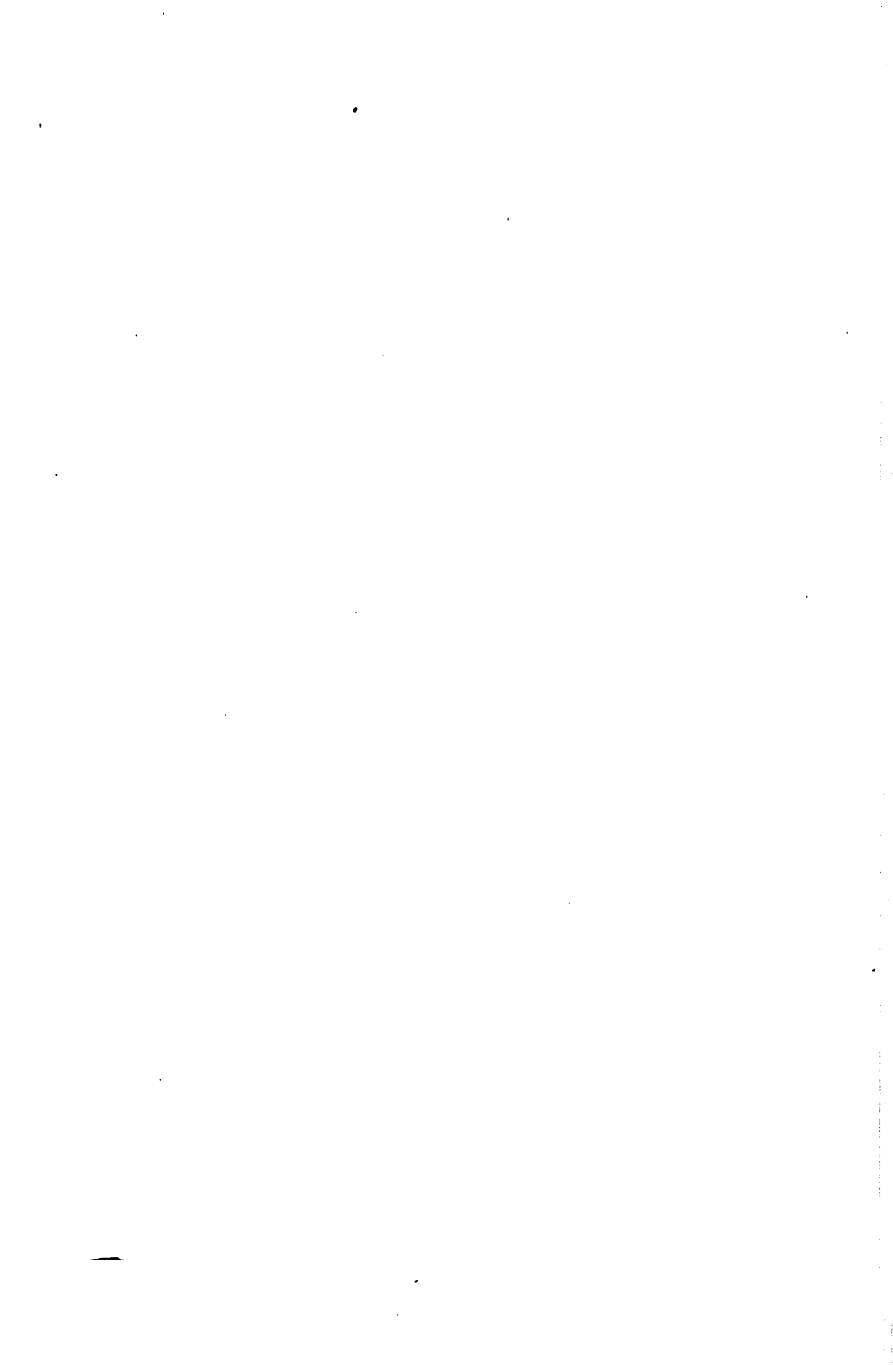
### XIII.

#### THE HOUSE'S DARLING.

O SWEET, shy girl, with roses in her heart  
And love-light in her face, like those upgrown;  
Full of still dreams and thoughts that, dream-like  
start

From fits of solitude when not alone!  
Gay dancer over thresholds of bright days,  
Tears quick to her eyes as laughter to her lips!  
A game of hide-and-seek with Time she plays—  
Time hides his eyes from her in blithe eclipse.  
O gentle-souled !—how dear and good she is,  
Bless'd by soft dewes of happiness and love ;  
Cradled in tenderest arms ! Her mother's kiss  
Seals all her good-night prayers. Her father's smile  
Brightens her mornings. Through the Earth shall  
move

Her child-sweet soul, not far from Heaven the while !





## XIV.

### M I R A G E .

**I** KNOW the Mirage—the vague, wandering  
ghost

That haunts the desert's still and barren sand  
With the close vision of a lovely land,  
Once blossoming, but now for ever lost :  
It rises to the eyes of men who bear  
Hunger of heart and thirst of lip in vain—  
Mocking their souls with rest. Behold, how plain!  
Taking the breathless sand and boundless air,  
It stands upon the horizon, far away :  
Lost fountains flutter under beckoning palm  
(Singing, all birds of longing thither start);  
Dear voices rise from homes where children play ;  
The footsteps lighten, the blest air blows balm.  
. . . Then all is sand—within a dreamer's heart !



XV.

THE TRUNDLE-BED.

[SEEN AT A HOUSEHOLD AUCTION.]

**D**O you remember, Will?—long, long ago!  
    . . . Yet there thou liest, though all the Past  
        lies dead,  
That nestled in thee, old, old trundle-bed!  
Nest of delicious fancies, dreams that grow  
No more!—quick magic-car to Fairyland!  
Ghosts walked the earth then (in our garret too:  
For Madge, the housemaid, told us—and she knew!)  
In thee we saw them near, how near us, stand!  
Stars then looked out of Heaven; to Heaven, light  
Prayers clothed like angels from our lips arose,  
Though from the heart of her who bent so close,  
Hushing us like tired flowers that feel the night.  
. . . Fresh morn, poor little dreamers lost or dead  
‘No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.’



## XVI.

### A MORNING IN SEPTEMBER.

**A**LL things are full of life this autumn morn ;  
The hills are gladdening under silver cloud  
A fresher spirit in Nature's breast is born ;  
The woods are blowing lustily and loud ;  
The crows fly, cawing, among the flying leaves ;  
On sunward-lifted branches struts the jay ;  
The fluttering brooklet, quick and bright, receives  
Bright frosty silverings slow from ledges gray  
Of rock in buoyant sunshine glittering ;  
Cold apples drop through orchards mellowing ;  
'Neath forest-eaves blithe squirrels dart along ;  
Farms answer farms as through bright morns of  
Spring,  
And joy, with dancing pulses full and strong,  
Joy everywhere is heard with laugh and song !



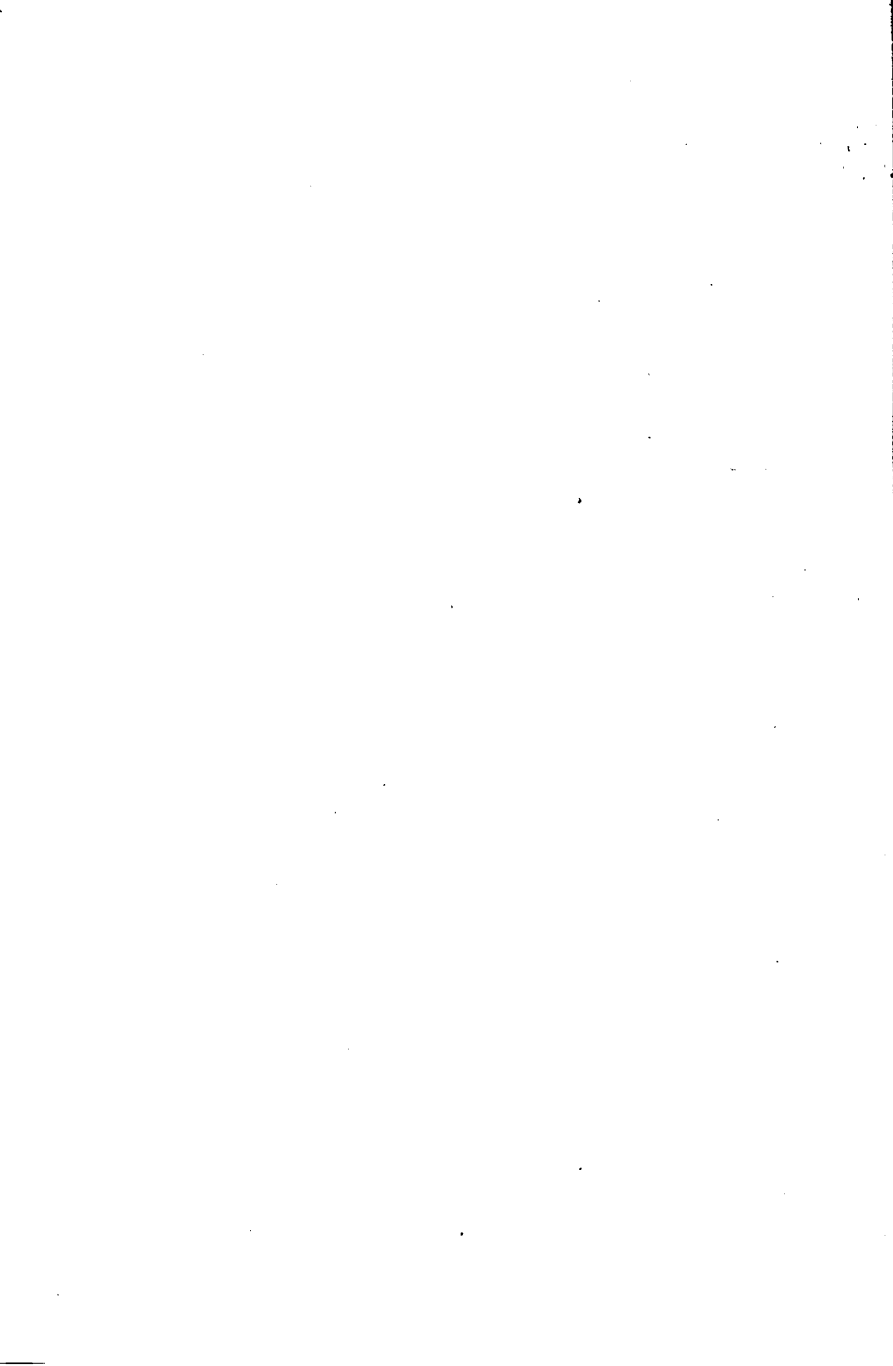
## XVII.

### NOONING AT THE HALF-WAY HOUSE.

[ON MY BIRTHDAY.]

**H**ERE at the Half-way House, a one-hour's  
guest,

I see, far back in yon bright valley deep,  
A tender mother rock her child asleep  
In the warm cradle of her happy breast ;  
And, forward, where the path I go must lead—  
Downward how far I cannot guess or know—  
In thick, blind mist, a house secure, but low,  
Where I shall rest to-night, and shall not heed  
The fierce, sharp tempest on the beaten wold  
Nor the close darkness. . . . I will journey on  
(Short is the deep descent, the guides have told)  
In trust that when the anxious day is gone,  
My sleep shall be the same—how soft and mild !—  
As, on my mother's breast, yon new-born child.





## XVIII.

### TRAVELLERS.

**W**E may not stand content : it is our part  
To drag slow footsteps after the far sight,  
The long endeavour following up the bright  
Quick aspiration ; there is ceaseless smart,  
Feeling but cold-hand surety for warm heart  
Of all desire ; no man may say at night  
His goal is reach'd ; the hunger for the light  
Moves with the star ; our thirst will not depart,  
Howe'er we drink. 'Tis what before us goes  
Keeps us aweary, will not let us lay  
Our heads in dreamland, though the enchanted palm  
Rise from our desert, though the fountain grows  
Up in our path, with slumber's flowering balm.  
The soul is o'er the horizon far away.



XIX.

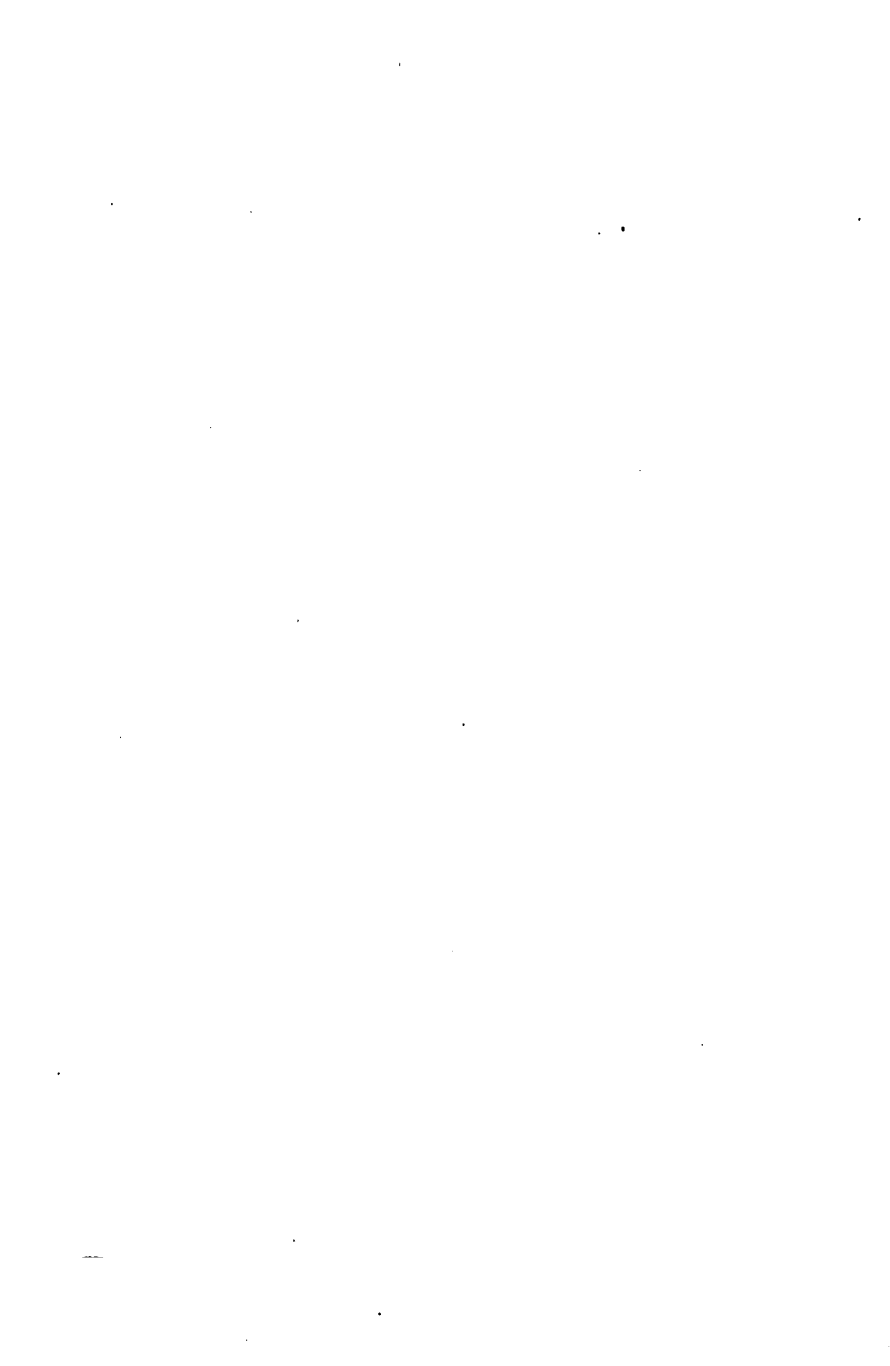
THE BRONZE STATUE OF WASHINGTON.

[APRIL, 1861.]

UPLIFTED when the April sun was down,  
Gold-lighted by the tremulous, fluttering  
beam,

Touching his glimmering steed with spurs in gleam,  
The Great Virginia Colonel into town  
Rode, with the scabbard emptied on his thigh,  
The Leader's hat upon his head, and lo !  
The old still manhood on his face aglow,  
And the old generalship quick in his eye !  
' O father !' said I, speaking in my heart,  
' Though but thy bronzed form is ours alone,  
And marble lips here in thy chosen place,  
Rides not thy spirit in to keep thine own,  
Or weeps thy Land, an orphan in the mart ?'  
. . . The twilight dying lit the deathless face.

WASHINGTON, D.C.



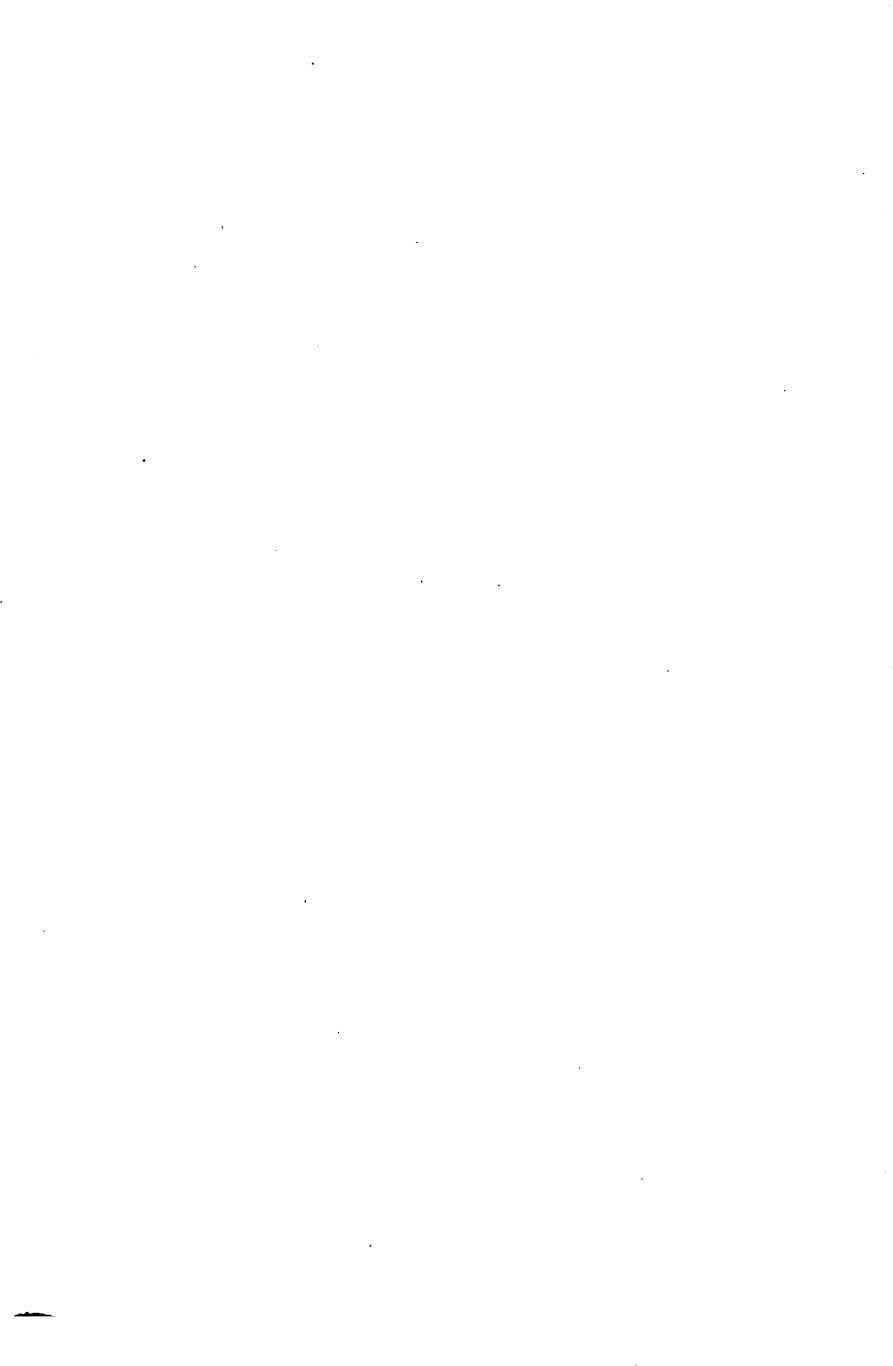
XX.

TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

[IN ~~1862~~.]

**S**TERN be the pilot in the dreadful hour  
When a great nation, like a ship at sea  
With the wroth breakers whitening at her lee,  
Feels her last shudder if her helmsman cower ;  
A godlike manhood be his mighty dower !  
Such and so 'gifted, Lincoln, may'st thou be,  
With thy high wisdom's low simplicity  
And awful tenderness of voted power.  
From our hot records then thy name shall stand  
On Time's calm ledger out of passionate days—  
With the pure debt of gratitude begun,  
And only paid in never-ending praise—  
One of the many of a mighty Land,  
Made by God's providence the Anointed One.

1862



## XXI.

### MY SHADOW'S STATURE.

**W**HENE'ER, in morning airs, I walk abroad,  
Breasting upon the hills the buoyant wind,  
Up from the vale my shadow climbs behind,  
An earth-born giant climbing toward his god ;  
Against the sun, on heights before untrod,  
I stand : faint-glorified, but undefined,  
Far down the slope in misty meadows blind,  
I see my ghostly follower slowly plod.  
' O stature of my shade,' I muse and sigh,  
' How great art thou, how small am I the while !'  
Then the vague giant blandly answers, ' True ;  
But though thou art small thy head is in the sky,  
Crowned with the sun and all the Heaven's smile—  
My head is in the shade and valley too.'





XXII.

MY NIGHTMARE.

**A**LL day my nightmare in my thought I keep :  
Spell-bound, it seem'd, by some magician's  
charm,

A giant slumber'd on my slothful arm ;  
His great slow breathings jarr'd the land of sleep  
(Like far-off thunder, rumbling low and deep),  
Lifting his brawny bosom bronzed and warm ;  
When lo ! a voice shook me with stern alarm :  
' Who art thou here that dost not sow nor reap ?  
Behold the Sleeping Servant of the Day—  
Arouse him to thy deed : if thou but break  
His slumberous spell, awake he will obey.'  
I lifted up my voice and cried, ' Awake !'  
And I awoke !—my arm, unnerved, lay dead,  
A useless thing beneath my sleeping head !



### XXIII.

#### GLOW-WORM AND STAR.

A GOLDEN twinkle in the wayside grass,  
See the lone glow-worm, buried deep in dew,  
Brightening and lightening the low darkness  
through,

Close to my feet that by its covert pass ;  
And, in the little pool of recent rain,  
O'erhung with tremulous grasses, look, how bright,  
Filling the drops along each blade with light,  
Yon great white star, some system's quickening  
brain,

Whose voyage through that still deep is never done  
Makes its small mirror by this gleam of earth !  
O soul, with wonders where thy steps have trod,  
Which is most wondrous, worm or mirrored sun ?  
. . . The Mighty One shows in everything one birth:  
The worm 's a star as high from thee in God.



XXIV.

TO A WOODLAND CATHEDRAL.

[IN OCTOBER.]

THROUGH stained oriels of the East and West,  
Thy floors float, radiant, with flutterings  
Of restless shadows, ghosts of glorious wings ;  
Some organ's soul arises in the breast  
Of him who walks thy aisles in reverie bound :  
The stops of silence tremble into sound.  
Lo, Nature brings her dead for burial rite !  
Within thy solemn chancel dress'd for Death  
She lays her beautiful ; the mother's brow  
Is bow'd, while for her darling ones she grieves,  
And o'er their burial breathes her tenderest breath  
As o'er their baptism in soft vernal light ;  
And Autumn, gorgeous preacher, murmurs now  
Sermons of wither'd flowers and fallen leaves !



## XXV.

### FARTHER.

[THE SUGGESTED DEVICE OF A NEW  
WESTERN STATE.]

**F**AR-OFF a young State rises, full of might ;  
    I paint its brave escutcheon. Near at hand  
See the log-cabin in the rough clearing stand ;  
A woman by its door, with steadfast sight,  
Trustful, looks Westward, where, uplifted bright,  
Some city's Apparition, weird and grand,  
In dazzling quiet fronts the lonely land,  
With vast and marvellous structures wrought of  
    light,  
Motionless on the burning cloud afar :  
The haunting vision of a time to be,  
After the heroic age is ended here,  
Built on the boundless, still horizon's bar  
By the low sun, his gorgeous prophecy  
Lighting the doorway of the pioneer !





BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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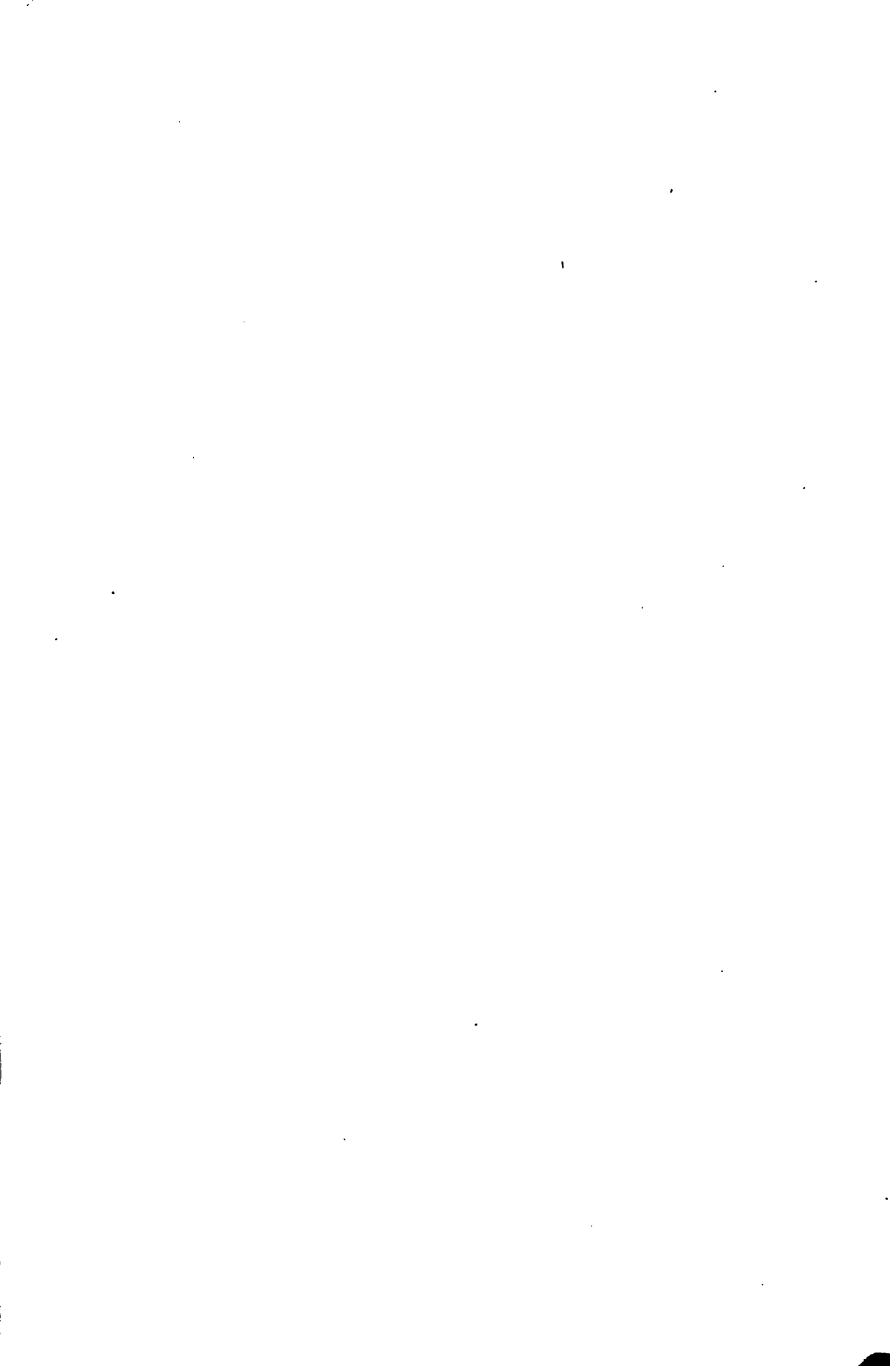
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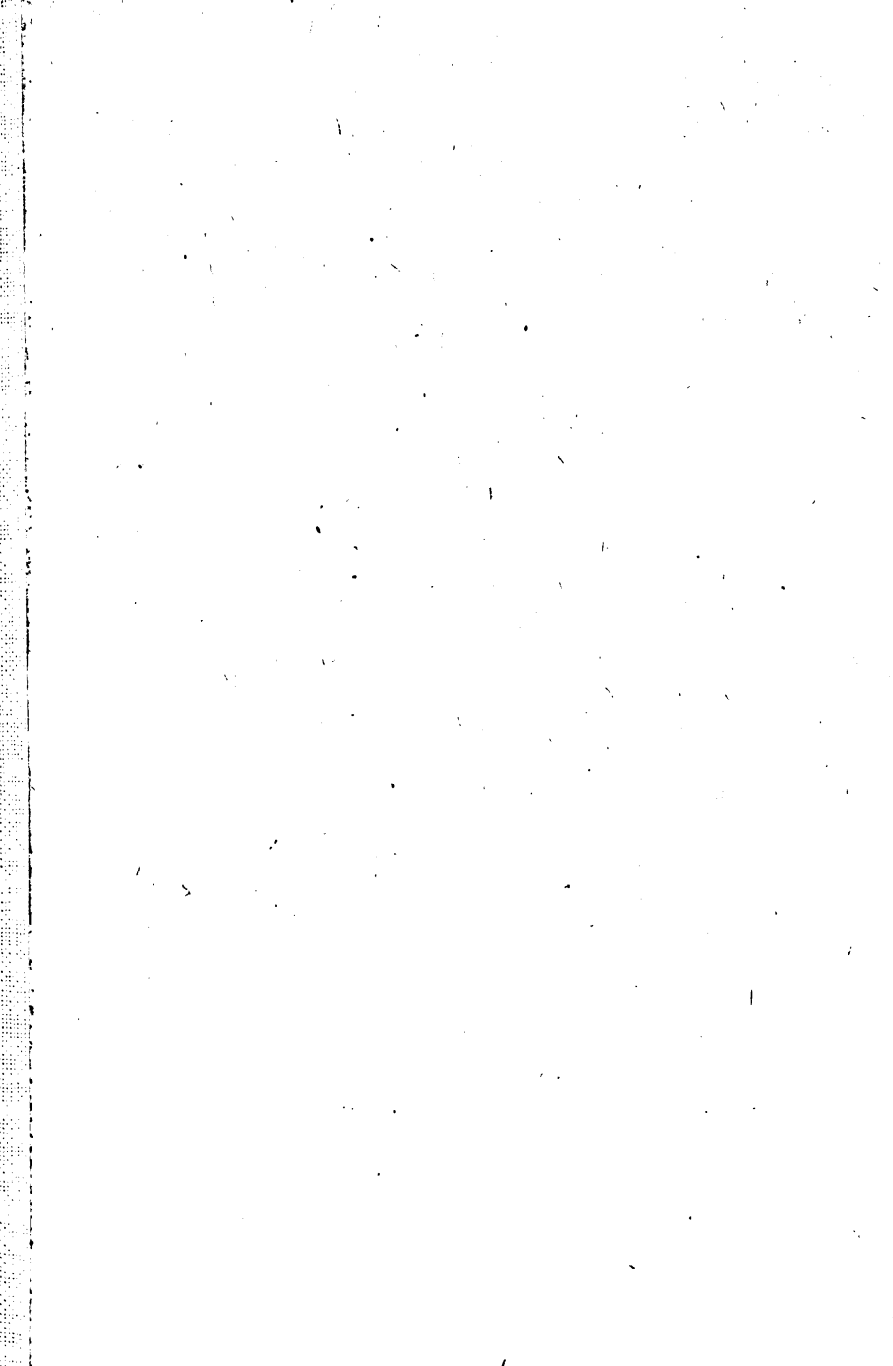
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